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DÜSSELDORF • GERMANY

Newsletter for English Teachers January 2006

This Newsletter for English Teachers is a monthly publication by the Information Resource Centers in Germany. It focuses on American Studies topics of relevance to our academic audiences.

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FEATURE OF THE MONTH:

A Heated Debate - EVOLUTION VERSUS INTELLIGENT DESIGN

What should public schools teach about the origin of life?

One of the most polemic and controversial issues before American school boards and state legislatures is the teaching of evolutionary theories in schools. The proponents of teaching alternatives to evolution want to have their views on the origins of life taught in science classes as a scientifically valid alternative to biological evolution. However, many scientists and teachers see intelligent design as a form of creationism and a direct attack on science and critical thinking.



LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

California Parents File Suit Over Origins of Life Course

Goodstein, Laurie. New York Times (Late Edition (East Coast)), Jan 11, 2006, pg A.18

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/11/national/11design.html>

ARTICLES

Charles Darwin: Evolution of a Scientist

Adler, Jerry. Newsweek, November 28, 2005, v146, #22, pp50

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10118787/site/newsweek>

"He had planned to enter the ministry, but his discoveries on a fateful voyage 170 years ago shook his faith and changed our conception of the origins of life."

Undoing Darwin

Mooney, Chris and Matthew C. Nisbet.

Columbia Journalism Review, Sep/Oct 2005, v44, #3, pp30

"A full-fledged national debate has been reawakened over an issue that once seemed settled." The authors argue that, "when the coverage of evolution shifts to the political and opinion pages, the scientific context falls away."

<http://www.cjr.org/issues/2005/5/mooney.asp>

Doubting Darwin

Adler, Jerry. Newsweek, February 7, 2005, v145, #6, pp44

"How did life, in its infinite complexity, come to be? A controversial new theory called 'intelligent design' asserts a supernatural agent was at work."

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6884904/site/newsweek>

The Wars Over Evolution

Lewontin, Richard C., The New York Review of Books, October 20, 2005, v52, #16, pp51

The Evolution-Creation Struggle by Michael Ruse and Not By Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution by Peter J. Richardson and Robert Boyd are reviewed.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/18363>

LINKS AND RESOURCES

- **National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT)**
http://www.nabt.org/sub/position_statements/evolution.asp
NABT's current "Position Statement On Teaching Evolution" is presented.
- **Evolution**
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/>
This PBS site provides supplemental material to each of the seven episodes of the PBS *Evolution* television series.
- **Triumph of Life**
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/triumphoflife>
This PBS site is based on the miniseries *Triumph of Life* presented as part of the *Nature* series which describes the history of life on Earth and the best scientifically understood mechanisms for its current diversity. An evolutionary timeline and other web-based instructional resources are provided.
- **Understanding Evolution**
<http://evolution.berkeley.edu>
Contains an extensive section especially for teachers, giving advice on teaching evolution, lesson plans, ways to avoid confusing students, and answering common student questions. From the UC Museum of Paleontology and the National Center for Science Education.
- **Botanical Society of America's Statement on Evolution**
<http://www.botany.org/newsite/announcements/evolution.php>
A clear explanation of evolution as a scientific theory is given. This is contrasted with the ideas of Intelligent Design/Creationism.

- **Evolution Website: BBC**
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/darwin>
 This 1998 site includes the full text of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and an illustrated guide to the book. Included are essays on Darwin and Darwinism for beginners to experts, the transcript of a question & answer session and a "Darwin Debate" with a panel of experts.
- **Intelligent Design**
<http://www.arn.org>
 The website for the Access Research Network offers articles and educational materials from an Intelligent Design viewpoint.
- **Science Wars - Should Schools Teach Intelligent Design?**
http://www.aei.org/events/filter.all.eventID.1169/event_detail.asp#
 In October 2005, panelists at a day-long American Enterprise Institute conference discussed *questions along the line of* "Is intelligent design religion or science? What should we teach in schools? Would the teaching of intelligent design violate the First Amendment's Establishment Clause?"

Going back in time: THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

On May 14, 1804, Capt. Meriwether Lewis and Lt. William Clark, charged by President Thomas Jefferson with finding a route to the Pacific Ocean, embarked from Camp Dubois, Ill., on the east bank of the Mississippi River. A 33-member group skilled in botany, zoology and outdoor survival accompanied them. The "Corps of Discovery" arrived at Oregon's Pacific coast in November of 1805 and returned to St. Louis on Sept. 23, 1806.



Feature Exhibition: Lewis and Clark

Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch * Oldenburg * Closing February 12, 2006

http://www.naturundmensch.de/html/ausstellung/sonderausstellungen/lmnm_ausstellung_sonder_0045.html

LINKS:

- **Library of Congress: American Memory**
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>
- **Outline of American History**
<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/histryotln/index.htm>
- **PBS: Lewis & Clark** <http://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/index.html>
- **About the USA** <http://usa.usembassy.de/history.htm>

FACTOIDS: **1** Number of places named "Lewis and Clark." That place is Lewis & Clark Village, Mo. (near St. Joseph), which had a population of 152 in 2002. http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

153,400 Number of Sioux Indians in the United States today. At the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Sioux nation was the most powerful tribe on the Great Plains. (This number refers to those who are part of the Sioux tribal grouping alone or in combination with another tribal grouping or race.) <<http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/phc-t18/tab001.pdf>>

MEET BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, AMERICA'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL CELEBRITY

Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday will be celebrated January 17. News of his endeavors in science and journalism preceded him to the capitals of Britain and France, where he argued and advocated for the rights of his newly formed nation. Benjamin Franklin, one of the United States' founding fathers, was equally comfortable in the roles of journalist, diplomat, philosopher, statesman and scientist. To learn more about Franklin's unique contributions to the birth of a nation and Enlightenment thinking, visit:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jan/06-875137.html?nid=nl20060111>



(Photo: American Philosophical Society)



HOLIDAYS IN THE U.S. - DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

<http://usa.usembassy.de/holidays-mlking.htm>

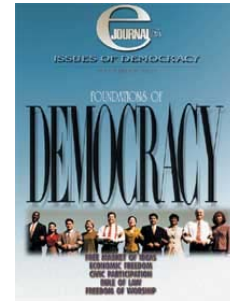
Americans on each third Monday of January honor the life and achievements of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., (1929-1968), the 1964 Nobel Peace laureate and the individual most associated with the triumphs of the African-American civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s.

"I Have A Dream" Speech - Audio and Transcript

<http://www.hpol.org/record.php?id=72>

NEW ELECTRONIC JOURNAL: FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY

People all over the world want to build futures for their families in free and open societies. This aspiration includes the desire to have basic human rights, participate in fair elections, practice one's religion, speak freely on public issues, and be certain that an impartial court system will decide violations of the law.



<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/1205/ijde/ijde1205.htm?nid=nl20051221>

ARTICLES & WEB SITE SUGGESTIONS

Important Trends on Religion

AEI Studies in Public Opinion, December 16, 2005, 9p

<http://infoalert.usembassy.de/12-05/e11.htm>

"This AEI Study in Public Opinion takes a look at religion in America today, examining such topics as religious faith and practice; the acceptability of candidates of different religions; President George W. Bush's faith; religion in public life; vote by denomination; journalists as compared with the general American public; and international comparisons of religion."

The MySpace Generation

Hempel, Jessy and Paula Lehman. Business Week, December 12, 2005, #3963, pp86-96

<http://infoalert.usembassy.de/12-05/e19.htm>

Being online is a way of life for millions of young Americans across the country. And increasingly, social networks are their medium. As the first cohort to grow up fully wired and technologically fluent, today's teens and twentysomethings are flocking to Web sites like Buzz-Oven as a way to establish their social identities.

The Real First World War and the Making of America

Anderson, Fred. American Heritage Magazine, November/December 2005, v56, #6

http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/2005/6/2005_6_75.shtml

"It has taken us two and a half centuries to realize just how important this legend-encrusted, largely forgotten conflict actually was."

PBS TeacherSource - Social Studies

http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/soc_stud.htm

The site, browsable by subject category and searchable by keyword and grade level, combines PBS video with online resources to create over 300 lesson plans and activities.

American Ethnic Geography. A Cultural Geography of the U.S. and Canada

<http://www.valpo.edu/geomet/geo/courses/geo200/HomePage.html>

Mapping is a great way to make raw data meaningful, and this collection of maps illustrates how ethnic groups, religions and denominations, languages, political participation and beliefs, and socio-economic status are distributed across the U.S.

The Modern Word

<http://www.themodernword.com>

This site is devoted to exploring twentieth-century experimental literature; it tackles surrealism, magical realism, modernism, and postmodernism with "a network of literary sites dedicated to exploring twentieth century writers who have pushed the envelope of traditional narrative and structure."

wikiHow

<http://wiki.ehow.com/Main-Page>

"How do I properly care for my bonsai tools? How to become a Punk Rocker?" - wikiHow is a collaborative writing project to build the world's largest how-to manual. The site currently contains 4528 articles written, edited, and maintained primarily by volunteers.

Some of these articles were taken from InfoAlert - InfoAlert highlights recent articles and reports from leading U.S. journals and policy sources and provides informed commentary on international and domestic issues. Many articles are available "full text", some articles may be password-protected. [More articles are available through our InfoAlert service at http://infoalert.usembassy.de](http://infoalert.usembassy.de) To register for a password, please contact us at infoalert.de@state.gov.

TALK OF THE TOWN:

New Oxford American Dictionary - *Podcast* Is the Word of the Year.

American Dictionary has selected *podcast* as the Word of the Year for 2005. *Podcast*, defined as "a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player," will be added to the next online update of the New Oxford American Dictionary, due in early 2006." <http://digbig.com/4fqse>

Runners-up for the 2005 Word of the Year include:

- **bird flu** (an often fatal flu virus of birds, esp. poultry, that is transmissible from them to humans, in whom it may also prove fatal)
- **ICE** (an entry stored in one's cellular phone that provides emergency contact information)
- **IDP** (internally displaced person; someone forced to relocate within a country because of a natural disaster or civil unrest)
- **IED** (improvised explosive device, such as a car bomb)
- **life hack** (a more efficient or effective way of completing an everyday task: "I found a great life hack for getting a cheap hotel room.")
- **persistent vegetative state** (a condition in which a patient recovering from a coma retains reflex responses and may appear wakeful, but has no cognitive functions or other evidence of cerebral cortical activity)
- **reggaeton** (a Latin American dance music which combines elements of reggae music with hip-hop and rap.) etc.

Teacher Seminar
Black History Month – February 2006

In the context of Black History Month, celebrated in the United States in February, we have invited **Ethel Morgan Smith**, Professor of English, West Virginia University, to conduct a teacher training seminar on Thursday, February 2, 2006, from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Amerika Haus in Cologne (Apostelnkloster 13-15).

We cordially invite you to attend the seminar, which will focus on **"African-American Women Writers" and their contribution to American literature and culture**. At the same time, Ethel Morgan Smith will speak about historical and contemporary African-American issues and discuss ways to present these in the classroom. Professor Smith is also a creative writer whose writing explores facets of the African-American experience in the U.S. (and, more recently, in Germany).

How to register: Interested teachers and teacher trainees are invited to register for the seminar by writing to the address below, giving their name, home address, institutional affiliation and telephone number and/or E-mail address. Send your application to:
Amerika Haus Köln, Apostelnkloster 13-15, 50672 Köln

E-mail applications will also be accepted, provided they furnish the required information (name, institutional affiliation, home address, and telephone number and/or e-mail address). Send your electronic application to: ahcologne@state.gov.

Deadline for registration for the seminar is January 31, 2006.

If you have any questions, please call Amerika Haus at 0221-209010.

Impressum:

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Wir nehmen Ihre Anregungen gerne auf.

